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CONTRIBUTION TO NSC BRIEFING ON ANTARTICA, 19 November 1956

I. Situation regarding claims to Antarctic territory is complex and confused.

- A. Nationals of 13 countries have at various times asserted claims, but only seven governments at present maintain these claims.

These are: Britain, France, Norway, Australia, New Zealand, Argentina, and Chile.

- B. Among other governments that display interest, the Soviet Union appears most likely to assert a claim sooner or later.

II. National claims in many cases overlap or otherwise conflict, but

at present open dispute continues only between Britain and Argentina

and Chile.

(None among claimants, Argentina maintains 5 permanently occupied ports, and Chile 4, at ports within their claims.) See graphics

III. In addition to strong public interest in Antarctica in several claimant

countries, the principal factor motivating these national claims

appears to be the pursuit of prestige.

A.



Policy: To view or allow national prestige is irrevocably committed in contesting British imperialism.

B. The Soviet Union's intrusion into the situation rules out

any slackening of zeal on the part of present claimants.

~~In their assessment of Soviet intentions toward the region,~~
C. Several governments, notably Britain and France, appear to

Antarctica)
believe ~~the region will~~ ultimately acquire greater strategic
may
and military ~~significance~~ value.

privately
D. None of the claimants/appears to ~~believe~~ credit the idea

continent
that the ~~region~~ will turn out to be of enormous economic

whaling in
value, although ~~several~~ the surrounding waters

potential
and ~~future~~ air transport needs tend to reinforce desire to

maintain claims.